

**seems like without
tenderness there's
something missing**

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Summary:

richie takes a joke too far and he's got to make it up to eddie

seems like without tenderness there's something missing

the losers are hanging out in the barrens after getting something to eat, they're all stuffed from burgers and fries and milkshakes that are way too big, they all agreed that walking around the barrens for a bit will be great after that, and it's a throwback for when they were all kids and would spend all their days here. now they're teenagers with cars and they can drive to bangor for the day if they want to have fun, or go see a movie at the aladdin or go to the new mall in the area.

"wanna go up to that new under eighteen bar in bangor? it's supposed to be *actually* fun." beverly offers up as they sit around the barrens, all but stan and eddie who didn't want to get mud on their pants.

most of them nodded in agreement, all liking the idea, especially of getting away from derry for the day. some were hesitant, ben, stan, and eddie were never a big fan of that lifestyle but typically went to hang out with the rest of the losers anyway.

"we can go in my c-car." bill spoke, he had been working on his stutter for years and it was almost obsolete, but it would still come up every once in a while.

they all got up, still having some money left from their meal to get a drink, but probably not much else. they would all have to squeeze into bill's car, and even though richie and mike had their own cars it would be easier for them all to get into one car.

richie was especially not complaining, because with all the seats taken and eddie still needing somewhere he *knew* what that meant. patting at his lap to eddie he almost missed eddie's blushed cheeks, he always tried to hide it by looking at his feet, but richie almost always saw.

"come on eds, i got a nice seat for you right here. who knows, you might even get a fun ride from it." he teased, winking at eddie with the crude comment that made eddie's face flush and red as beverly's hair.

"shut up richie. beep beep." doubled the shut up, richie had successfully made eddie flustered. that didn't stop him from sitting on richie's lap, and now it was richie's turn to be flustered. of course he had to play it cool, he was richie tozier, even though he had his crush of four years sitting on his lap.

richie didn't know what to do with his hands, keep them on his side? wrap them around eddie? he wanted to do the latter, wrap his hands around eddie's waist and nuzzle his head in eddie's neck and give him a gentle kiss to remind him that he loved him.

remind him, he could scoff, how can he remind him of something he didn't know?

bangor wasn't too far away, but it was still quite a drive, and everyone texted their parents where they would be and richie looked over eddie's shoulder and onto his phone. texts to *mommy* were shown, and he was currently typing out *i'm going to bangor with my friends for a bit, i'll be home soon mommy. sorry!* richie couldn't help but laugh, and he squeezed eddie's side to prepare for the joke. "hope mommy doesn't get mad and spank you, that's my job."

eddie jumped at the squeezing received to the sides of his waist, something richie frequently done and eddie *hated*. it was almost tickling but not quite, and he hated it either way. he also hated richie's next comment, somehow a mixture of a mom joke and sexual one. "shut up, or i'm going to move to bev's lap instead.

richie gave him a little pout, as if his plump lips needed to look anymore plump. "aw, don't do that to me eddie. anyway, i thought you wanted to have a ride, and bev can't give you that." he bucked his hips up against eddie to make him move up as his 'ride'.

eddie was so glad his face wasn't in the direction of richie, because he had never been more red in his entire life. "you're disgusting richie!"

richie rested his head on eddie's shoulder, trying to look up and see his face. "you love it, eds."

"what i don't love is you calling me eds." eddie scoffed out, never having been so annoyed and flustered all at once.

"so you admit to loving this?" richie asked, continuing to buck his hips and laugh hysterically.

eddie used his hands to hit at richie behind him in attempt to get him to stop, and richie continued to laugh in his ear like a maniac.

"you are the bane of my existence, richie tozier!" eddie screamed at him.

"and you are my best friend, eddie kaspbrak." richie smiled, kissing his cheek and leaning back against his seat with a smile.

eddie wiped the skin where richie's lips had once been, feigning disgust, but his heart was beating out of his chest and he hated just how crazy in love with his best friend he was.

they all reached the club, some place called valencia, and eddie was quick to jump off richie's lap and onto his own two feet. richie missed the feeling of eddie's body on his, and the warmth that radiated off of him, but he couldn't expect much else.

he wasn't supposed to be in love with eddie, he wasn't supposed to be crazy about his best friend, so he had to hide it. he had to make comments and innuendos that were obvious but taken as jokes, he had to act like the real thought disgusted him, all because he couldn't risk ruining the friendship.

sure, sometimes he thought eddie was into him, especially with how much he blushed around him, but he was afraid. what if they dated and broke up and he lost eddie forever? what if eddie didn't actually like him and it was all apart of his imagination? he was always a flirt, except when it came to the one person who mattered.

so they all waited in the line but quickly making it in. "why do they even need a line? they're gonna let everyone in either way."

"to seem cool and like a *real* club." mike responded, smiling at himself and laughing.

it was pretty boppin, fluorescent lights and typical club remixes. it was everything you could expect from an under eighteen club, a bunch of horny teens grinding on each other and either high or drunk off things from *outside* the club.

"wish i had whatever they're having." richie said to eddie, poking him and pointing at an obviously drunk couple.

"i'm glad you don't, i much prefer you when you're sober." eddie rolled his eyes, having seen richie drunk more times than he'd like.

he would have replied, but the sight of beverly and bill waving him over to dance distracted him. "are you coming to dance, eds?" he questioned, hoping his best friend would say yes.

he knew he wouldn't though, and he was right. eddie shook his head and turned around to hang out with stan and ben, and richie could tell mike was already off with some girl.

"hey bitches, richie is here to dance!" richie shouted with his hands up as he made it to his friends, the three of them dancing ridiculously and jokingly grinding on each other.

eddie watched from a distance, eyes longing for his tall curly haired friend, currently bent over and rubbing his ass against beverly marsh. he would have laughed at the sight, if he wasn't too busy self pitying himself for his crush on his best friend. richie never failed to get his heart racing, but he was used to accepting the fact that he had no chance with richie.

everyone knew of his crush on richie, and ben being the hopeless romantic he was was desperate to get them together, which is why he noticed eddie's longing look. "come on, eddie, just tell him how you feel. if you don't you're going to regret it."

ben could speak from experience, having had that with his crush on beverly.

"no, he doesn't like me like that." eddie's voice was sad and somber, taking a sip of the water he asked the 'bar' for.

"you'll never know until you try, which you *should*." ben continued to bother him, and while eddie appreciated it he had already accepted the fact that it would never happen.

eddie tried to give him a reassuring smile though all it showed was dejection, and ben knew when to give up.

eddie had been speaking to some guy for quite some while, much to richie's dismay. he was an all american type of guy, blonde hair and broad shoulders, not very tall and too stereotypically attractive to be *really* attractive. he was sitting at the bar with eddie and they had been talking for who knows how long, and since richie noticed he couldn't stop looking.

he was trying to distract himself on the dance floor, he was in between beverly and bill, and while that usually would have been fun he was too busy looking at the guy so *obviously* flirting with eddie. it made his blood boil and his heart break, and there was almost nothing he could do about it. emphasis on the *almost*.

because now he was on his way to the two of them, leaving bill and bev in the dust as he made his way to the flirty relationship he loathed to see.

"well hey there eddie, eddie spaghetti, what are you doing?" he wrapped his arm around eddie's smaller frame, not looking at his *competition*.

"um, hi richie." eddie was obviously confused at richie's current actions. "i'm just talking to justin here."

richie now looked at the all american boy, who he already hated. "oh, *hi* justin, i'm richie. i'm eddie's bestest friend. so if you wanna be balls deep in this boys ass, you're gonna have to test it out on me first. gotta make sure my home boy here only gets the *best fucking*." he could feel the rage radiating off eddie.

justin was obviously uncomfortable at his comments, laughing them off. "oh, um,

hi. well i should probably be looking for my friends, but i'll see you around eddie?" it came out a question, and he thankfully moved away and left richie and eddie alone.

richie gladly took justin's seat and asked for a coke from the alcohol free bar. looking back at eddie in the horrible lighting of the bar he could see eddie's face was red once more. this time it was red from anger, rather than what richie usually preferred.

"you are such an asshole, richie." eddie spoke with venom in his voice, and richie rolled his eyes at it.

"why? did you actually *like* that guy?" he questioned, using his horrible sense of humor to hide from his true feelings.

"well i don't know, but he was flirting with me and i wanted to see if maybe i could like him!" he shouted towards richie.

"you thought he was flirting with you? eddie, my dear, no one is trying to flirt with you. as if you could get someone to date you, much less flirt with you!" he joked, laughing his ass off until he saw the look on eddie's face. it was a look that made him instantly regret every thing he had ever said to eddie, that look of utter shock and heartbreak playing on his baby face broke richie's heart.

and it was all his fault.

"eddie, i'm sorry." he got up to speak, but eddie was already on his way out from the the club.

"shut the fuck up richie. you're such an asshole, i fucking hate you." he hissed out, running out of the club and leaving richie to pull at his hair and curse at himself.

"nice going, tozier." he just got his coke, but he wasn't able to drink it as he was out on his way chasing after the boy he loved.

running through the crowd of teens trying to recreate *dirty dancing*, and he couldn't care less because god he really fucked up tonight. worse than usual.

running out into the crisp maine air and into the streets only lit by the moon and street lights. he didn't know where eddie had gone, walking around the street hoping he spotted the small boy he just wanted to hold in his arms and beg for forgiveness.

spotting bill's car he assumed that's where eddie must have gone, it was the safest place the paranoid boy could have gone. making his way to the dark green truck that was parked he was right in his guess, the boy leaning against the car with his hands in his face.

god, he was crying, richie really did fuck up.

“eddie...eddie.” richie moved to him, trying to take him in his arms but eddie pushed him away. “i’m sorry, it was a joke and i took it too far. i’m really sorry.”

“just leave me alone, you dick. you’ve done enough damage tonight.” eddie’s eyes were red and his cheeks were stained with his tears, and his eyes were screaming with anger.

“eddie, i’m really sorry. i didn’t mean it, i mean, are you kidding?” richie scoffed, feeling eddie’s tear filled eyes on him. “you’re adorable, and sexy, and extremely attractive. and i’m not just saying that, i mean god you drive everyone around you crazy with those big brown eyes and the way your hair gets wavy when it gets too long, and when you wear those red shorts that don’t fit you anymore but god that’s what makes it so great. not to mention you’re funny, you’re so hilarious, you never fail to give me some good chuckles same with everyone else in the group. you’re so charming too, that guy was totally flirting with you in there, just like so many other guys have in the past. you can totally get someone to date you if you wanted them, and any of them would be lucky.”

looking down at eddie’s doe eyes richie’s heart was racing, he was bordering on a confession of his feelings with everything he said and now it was up to eddie and what he said next to decide what would happen next.

“you really mean that?” eddie asks, his eyes looking up at him, filled with love rather than tears now.

richie gave him an upturned smile, slowly growing into more. “of course i do, eddie.”

eddie himself could feel a similar smile forming, along with his heart racing and his hands getting sweaty and *god were his knees getting weak?* “richie...” he didn’t know what to say, how to handle this, and he tried to turn it into a joke and hit his shoulder.

but apparently richie had moves, because with eddie’s hand hitting richie’s shoulder richie knew what to do. he grabbed eddie’s arm on him and pulls him in for a kiss, the feeling of their lips hitting something the both of them had been craving for years.

they didn’t even care that richie’s big teeth got in the way, or the lack of rhythm, because it was *finally* happening. their lips hastily touched and the two recklessly kissed the other back, and it was sweet and a requiem for their once seemingly unrequited crush, and most importantly it was *tender*.

richie didn’t care if he ruined the friendship now, because the feeling of eddie’s lips on his made it worth it.

eddie pulled away before the kiss could become anymore heated, but richie kept his forehead pressed against his and his eyes closed, and he began to stroke that wavy hair atop eddie's head.

"i never thought i'd be so happy about you insulting me." eddie laughed against him, and richie didn't even need to open his eyes to see the smile on his face.

"me neither, maybe i should insult you more." he teased, finally opening his eyes and looking at his now lover.

"insult me again and no more of this, trashmouth." eddie's venom now had love in it, their bickering back to being kind.

"fine, because i'm never going to stop kissing you now that i've had a taste." he flirted once more, going in for another kiss until eddie pushed him away once more.

"oh no, i still need to recover from that last one." eddie thought he was shaking just from that kiss.

richie wiggled his eyebrows, squeezing eddie's side once more. "that good?"

"that bad." he teased, pushing his way out of him and walking back towards the club.

"where are you going?" richie asked, following from behind.

"where do you think? back to our friends, we did come here with them, *idiot.*" eddie teased to what he hoped was his now boyfriend.

"after all this and you're still mean to me." richie grabbed his heart dramatically to seem hurt.

"shut it, trashmouth, you're still in the dog house." he gave him a pointed finger as richie caught up.

"fine, as long as you love me baby." richie put his arms around eddie as they walked, head in eddie's neck.

"aren't you moving quickly?" eddie loved it.

"after four years of foreplay, i think i can move as quickly as i'd like." richie teased.

"fair." eddie admitted, loving the feeling of being in richie's arms, which ended up going away.

"come on, eds, i wanna dance *with somebody who loves me!*" he sings, running to the

club.

eddie shakes his head, smiling at the tall boy dancing in the street. “i can’t believe this is the boy i’ve loved for four years.”

richie didn’t hear, but he didn’t need to.

they both knew it.